

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed 23 September 2004, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider the above-captioned application in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Claims 1-38 were previously pending in this application. The Examiner has rejected pending Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 9-12, 20, 23, 24, 28, 29, 32, 24 and 38. With the above amendment, the Applicant has amended Claims 1, 6, 9, 15, 20, 24, 29 and 34. Reconsideration of this claim set as amended is respectfully requested.

In particular, the Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 3, 5, 7-8, 13-19, 21-22, 25-27, 30-31, 33 and 35-37. The Examiner has stated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base independent claim and any intervening claims. With the amendments included herein, the Applicant has done so, such that the subject matter of amended independent Claims 1, 6, 9, 20, 24, 29 and 34 corresponds to the subject matter of originally filed and previously pending Claims 5, 8, 14, 22, 27, 31 and 37.

Rejection of Independent Claims under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 1 as being anticipated by Harris et al. The Applicants have amended Claim 1 in order to include the language of original Claim 5. Claim 1 now is drawn to identical subject matter to that of previously pending Claim 5, which the Examiner indicated was drawn to allowable subject matter.

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 6 as being unpatentable over Harris et al. in view of Eastman et al. The Applicants have amended Claim 6 in order to include the language of original Claim 8. Claim 6 now is drawn to identical subject matter to that of previously pending Claim 8, which the Examiner indicated was drawn to allowable subject matter.

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 14 as being unpatentable over Harris et al. in view of Eastman et al. The Applicants have amended Claim 14 in order to include the language of original Claim 9. Claim 14 now is drawn to identical subject

matter to that of previously pending Claim 9, which the Examiner indicated was drawn to allowable subject matter.

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 20 as being unpatentable over Harris et al. in view of Eastman et al. The Applicants have amended Claim 20 in order to include the language of original Claim 22. Claim 20 now is drawn to identical subject matter to that of previously pending Claim 22, which the Examiner indicated was drawn to allowable subject matter.

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 24 as being unpatentable over Harris et al. in view of Eastman et al. The Applicants have amended Claim 24 in order to include the language of original Claim 27. Claim 24 now is drawn to identical subject matter to that of previously pending Claim 27, which the Examiner indicated was drawn to allowable subject matter.

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 29 as being unpatentable over Harris et al. in view of Eastman et al. The Applicants have amended Claim 29 in order to include the language of original Claim 31. Claim 29 now is drawn to identical subject matter to that of previously pending Claim 31, which the Examiner indicated was drawn to allowable subject matter.

The Examiner has rejected independent Claim 34 as being unpatentable over Harris et al. in view of Eastman et al. The Applicants have amended Claim 34 in order to include the language of original Claim 37. Claim 34 now is drawn to identical subject matter to that of previously pending Claim 37, which the Examiner indicated was drawn to allowable subject matter.

Because independent Claims 1, 6, 9, 20, 24, 29 and 34 are now drawn to subject matter that the Examiner has indicated is allowable, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner pass each of these Claims to allowance.

Rejection of Dependent Claims under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner has rejected dependent Claims 2, 10, 11, 12, 23, 28, 32 and 38 as being unpatentable over Harris et al in view of Eastman et al. The Examiner also rejected dependent Claim 4 as being unpatentable over Harris et al in view of McDonald et al.

With the above amendments to independent Claims 1, 9, 20, 24, 29 and 34, each of these previously rejected dependent claims now depends from an independent claim that is drawn to allowable subject matter.

Because each of these dependent claims depends from a claim drawn to allowable subject matter and includes all the elements of that independent claim, the dependent claims are in a condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection from dependent Claims 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 23, 28, 32 and 38 and pass these claims to allowance.

Objection to Dependent Claims

As noted above, the Examiner has objected to Claims 3, 5, 7-8, 13-19, 21-22, 25-27, 30-31, 33 and 35-37 as being drawn to allowable subject matter, but being presented in dependent form and depending from non-allowable base claims.

With the amendments herein, Claims 5, 8, 14, 22, 27, 31 and 37 have been canceled and the subject matter of these claims embedded into the amended independent Claims from which these Claims originally depended. This subject matter is now claimed in independent Claims 1, 6, 9, 20 24, 29 and 34, respectively, as discussed above.

Claim 15 has been amended to correct its dependence from Claim 14, now canceled, to amended Claim 9, which now includes all the subject matter encompassed within previously pending Claim 14.

The remaining dependent Claims that were objected to, *i.e.* Claims 3, 7, 13, 15-19, 21, 25-26, 30, 33 and 35-36, now depend from independent base claims that are drawn to subject matter that the Examiner has indicated as allowable. Because of this, these dependent claims are in a condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection from dependent Claims 3, 7, 13, 15-19, 21, 25-26, 30, 33 and 35-36 and pass these claims to allowance.

CONCLUSION

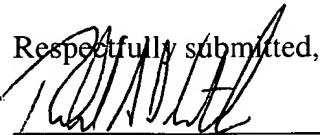
In light of the amendment and remarks presented herein, Applicant submits that the case is in condition for immediate allowance and respectfully requests such action.

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Amendment dated 19 January 2005
Reply to Office Action of 27 Sep 2004

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Every independent claim currently pending in the case is drawn to subject matter that the Examiner has indicated is allowable, and all pending dependent claims depend from one of these claims drawn to allowable subject matter. If any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's counsel at the number provided below so that a resolution can be most effectively reached.

Respectfully submitted,


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19 Jan 2005

Date